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## Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, a Senator from the State of Delaware.

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O Lord, we know You are mighty and we are weak. But we take heart because Your power makes mountains tremble.

As our Senators rely on Your strength for this day, fill them with renewed faith and love. Give them the security and serenity they need to face today's challenges and to glorify You in their thoughts, words, and deeds. Grip them with the conviction that You will provide them with supernatural strength, vision, and guidance.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable CHRISTOPHER A. COONS led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. INOUE).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, April 17, 2012.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, a Senator from the State of Delaware, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. COONS thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

### SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 11:00. Republicans will control the first half and the majority will control the final half. At 11:00 there will be 10 minutes of debate on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to the postal reform bill. At 11:10 there will be a cloture vote—or at approximately 11:10—on the motion to proceed to the postal reform bill. The Senate will recess from 12:30 to 2:15 today for our weekly caucus meetings. We have to make progress on the postal reform bill today which is so vitally important to more than half a million workers.

### BUFFETT RULE

Mr. REID. Yesterday Senate Republicans once again rejected the idea that millionaires and billionaires should contribute their fair share to help the country prosper. Republicans sent a message to millions of honest hard-working Americans who will file their taxes today: It is fair for Warren Buffett to pay a lower tax rate than his secretary. And that is not fair.

Republicans said that it is fair for Mitt Romney to pay a lower tax rate than his cleaning lady or his chauffeur. That is not fair. My Republican colleagues believe it is fair for hedge fund managers and executives to pay a lower tax rate than schoolteachers and waitresses and busdrivers. But that is something you do not have to take my word for; that is what President Ronald

Reagan called a system of unproductive tax loopholes that allows some of the truly wealthy to avoid paying their fair share.

In 1985 Ronald Reagan knocked the web of loopholes that allowed people making hundreds of millions of dollars each year to pay lower tax rates than construction workers or janitors. President Reagan called it crazy, and, to his credit, he worked with a couple of Democrats—Senator Bradley of New Jersey and Congressman Gephardt of Missouri—and came up with the Bradley-Gephardt Tax Fairness Act. It worked well for a long time, but we have allowed other things to get in the way of that good Bradley-Gephardt legislation. Now we are back to what Ronald Reagan was talking about those many years ago.

This broken system made it possible for millionaires to pay nothing while a busdriver was paying 10 percent of his salary. That is what President Reagan said. But the same system is in place today, as I have just explained, and, as that radical liberal Ronald Reagan said, that is just crazy. Those were his words.

Yesterday my Republican colleagues used some strong words to oppose the Democrats' plan to fight the inequality. Republicans called our common-sense proposal to ensure that no one making more than \$1 million a year pays a lower tax rate than a truckdriver, a secretary, or a police officer—they called it class warfare. It is not class warfare but class welfare—welfare for the wealthy at the expense of the middle class. It is class welfare, not warfare.

Republicans are pushing a budget that would end Medicare as we know it—just passed the House—slashing nursing home coverage for the elderly, decimating Pell grant funding, and kicking 200,000 children out of the Head Start Program.

They are calling our proposal class warfare. I wish that were the most ridiculous thing they have said about

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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